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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8804
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RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY 0255
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1289
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1361
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 6161
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JEDDAH 000134

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RIYADH, PLEASE PASS TO DHAHRAN; DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARPI;
PARIS FOR ZEYA; LONDON FOR TSOU

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SUBJECT: KUWAITI CONSUL GENERAL SAYS KUWAIT HAS BEEN
STRENGTHENED BY ADVERSITY

Classified By: Consul General Tatiana Gfoeller, for reasons 1.4(b)
and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. On January 18, Consul General Gfoeller and Jeddah Pol/Econ Chief paid a condolence call on Kuwaiti Consul General Ali I. Al-Nikhailan to express condolences at the recent death of the Emir Sheikh Jaber. In an accompanying conversation, Al-Nikhailan commented positively on the impending succession of power by constitutional means from the new, but seriously ill Emir Sheikh Saad, to a successor. The Consul General also discussed Kuwaiti attitudes toward the trial of Saddam Hussein and the lingering effects of the occupation of Kuwait. The Kuwaiti said that Saddam tried to divide Sunni and Shi'ite, but failed, and the two groups came closer together as a nation, as a result. END SUMMARY.

CONDOLENCE CALL ON NEW KUWAITI CONSUL GENERAL

12. (C) On January 18, after the death of Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber, but before the Kuwaiti Assembly deposed new Emir Sheikh Saad and replaced him with Sheikh Sabah, Consul General and Pol/Econ Chief made a condolence call on Kuwaiti Consul General Ali I. Al-Nikhailan to convey the mission's condolences on the death of the late Emir. (Biographical Note: Consul General Al-Nikhailan appeared to be about 40 years of age, spoke flawless English and exemplified the modern generation of Arab officials who are assuming positions of responsibility throughout the Arab World. We must anticipate with interest what will occur when, and if, this young generation of progressive officials and business leaders break through to the highest levels of power, still, in many cases, occupied by men two generations older than they. End Note.)

KUWAITI CONSTITUTION PROVES ITS METTLE

13. (C) The Kuwaiti Consul General proudly cited the events unfolding in Kuwait as evidence of the strength of democracy there. He was supremely confident that the challenge to the recently installed, but physically incapacitated Emir, Sheikh Saad, would be concluded in accordance with the Kuwaiti Constitution and accepted by the population. He offered Kuwait as an historical example of tolerance and democracy in the region. He observed that there were churches in Kuwait, and that all religions and people could coexist there.

KUWAITIS IMPATIENT FOR VERDICT AND HANGING

¶4. (C) The CG asked Al-Nikhailan to assess the Kuwaiti attitude toward the trial of Saddam Hussein moving fitfully forward in Baghdad. Kuwaitis, he reminded us, suffered so cruelly under Saddam that they had no doubt of his just deserts and were eager that the trial conclude and the villain be executed. He asserted that Kuwaitis recognized the necessity that the trial be conducted fairly, however.

KUWAITI SOCIETY EMERGED FROM OCCUPATION MORE UNIFIED THAN BEFORE

¶5. (C) The CG observed that Saddam had successfully controlled Iraq for 30 years by dividing Sunni and Shi'ite and inquired if Saddam had attempted to divide the Kuwaiti people during the occupation. Al-Nikhailan said that Saddam made an attempt to do so, but failed. In Kuwait, Sunni and Shi'ite had lived together with tolerance for generations. When confronted with the occupation and attempts to divide them, Sunni and Shiite in Kuwait came together in a common cause and emerged more united than before.
Gfoeller